

Message Text

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SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF SEPTEMBER 10 WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE
BY DON OBERDORFER HEADLINED "LEGISLATION TO SUPPORT U.S.
KOREAN PULLOUT FACES A DELAY."

QUOTE

PLANNED LEGISLATION TO SUPPORT THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S.
GROUND TROOPS FROM SOUTH KOREA MAY HAVE TO BE POSTPONED
BECAUSE OF THE GROWING DISPUTE OVER THE RETURN OF TONGSUN
PARK, CARTER ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAID YESTERDAY.

THIS IS THE STRONGEST INDICATION YET THAT THE KOREAN
INFLUENCE-PEDDLING SCANDAL IN WHICH PARK IS A CENTRAL FIGURE,
IS BEGINNING TO AFFECT THE OVERALL RELATIONS OF THE TWO
NATIONS.

THE LEGISLATION IN QUESTION IS A BILL TO PERMIT DEPARTING
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U.S. TROOPS TO LEAVE BEHIND \$500 MILLION TO \$600 MILLION
IN WEAPONS AND SUPPLIES TO SHORE UP KOREAN DEFENSIVE
CAPABILITIES. THIS IS PART OF THE COMPENSATORY AID PROGRAM
PROMISED TO THE SEOUL REGIME IN JUNE BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
HAROLD BROWN.

THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAD HOPED TO OBTAIN PASSAGE OF A

WEAPONS TRANSFER BILL THIS FALL IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE TO SOUTH KOREA, JITTERY ASIAN ALLIES AND THE U.S. MILITARY THAT THE AID COMMITMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE TROOP WITHDRAWAL WILL BE FULFILLED.

HOWEVER, WHITE HOUSE DISCUSSIONS WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS HAVE RAISED DOUBT ABOUT THE CHANCES FOR THE BILL IN LIGHT OF THE TONGSUN PARK CONTROVERSY.

THE SURPRISINGLY NARROW 203-TO-181 DEFEAT IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THURSDAY OF A "SYMBOLIC CUT" IN U.S. AID TO KOREA--ALONG WITH THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT'S INCREASINGLY PROVOCATIVE STATEMENTS AGAINST RETURNING THE INDICTED BUSINESSMAN-LOBBYIST TO THE UNITED STATES FOR TRIAL--HAVE INCREASED THE CONCERN ABOUT CONGRESS' REACTION AT PRESENT TO KOREA-RELATED LEGISLATION.

THURSDAY'S VOTE SHOWS "THERE IS A FAIRLY SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF RELUCTANCE TO VOTE FOR ANYTHING FOR KOREA RIGHT NOW," SAID REP. SAMUEL S. STRATTON (D-N.Y.), CHAIRMAN OF A HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE WHICH HAS BEEN STUDYING THE TROOP WITHDRAWAL PLAN.

STRATTON, AN ADVOCATE OF MILITARY SUPPORT FOR KOREA AND A SKEPTIC ABOUT THE PLANNED TROOP WITHDRAWAL, SAID THE DISPUTE OVER TONGSUN PARK "WILL CERTAINLY COMPLICATE" THE UNCLASSIFIED

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WITHDRAWAL OF THE U.S. TROOPS AND "SPELLS REAL TROUBLE" IN WASHINGTON-SEOUL RELATIONS UNLESS IT IS RESOLVED.

SENATE MAJORITY WHIP ALAN CRANSTON (D-CALIF.) SAID CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC FEELING ABOUT THE DISPUTE "CERTAINLY COULD COMPLICATE" U.S.-KOREAN RELATIONS, THOUGH HE ADDED HE IS STILL UNCERTAIN HOW SERIOUS IT WILL BE.

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF APPROVED PRESIDENT CARTER'S PLAN TO WITHDRAW U.S. GROUND TROOPS ON THE EXPLICIT CONDITION THAT A COMPENSATORY AID PROGRAM TO KOREA BE CARRIED OUT.

THE FAILURE TO ENACT AUTHORITY FOR SUCH A PROGRAM COULD BRING A SHIFT IN THE JOINT CHIEFS' POSITION, WITH MAJOR U.S. POLITICAL EFFECT.

WHITE HOUSE SOURCES SAID YESTERDAY THAT CARTER IS STRONGLY DETERMINED TO PROCEED WITH HIS WITHDRAWAL PLAN AND WILL NOT BE DETERRED BY SEOUL'S INFLEXIBILITY ON MILITARY OR POLITICAL ISSUES.

THESE SOURCES SUGGESTED THAT CARTER MIGHT SEEK TO WITHDRAW THE U.S. TROOPS ON SCHEDULE EVEN IF THE COMPENSATORY AID PROGRAM COULD NOT BE PASSED.

UNTIL RECENTLY CARTER ADMINISTRATION STRATEGISTS HAD LARGELY SUCCEEDED IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO SEPARATE THE KOREAN SCANDAL AND THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA, ON THE ONE HAND, FROM THE QUESTION OF TROOP WITHDRAWALS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THE U.S. MILITARY, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR THE SEOUL GOVERNMENT ON THE OTHER. THE ARGUMENT, ACCEPTED BY MANY LAWMAKERS AND PUBLIC OPINION LEADERS, WAS THAT KOREA'S CRUCIAL POSITION IN THE SOVIET-CHINESE-JAPANESE STRATEGIC TRIANGLE IS OF OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE.

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EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS HAVE MADE THE COMPARTMENTALIZATION OF U.S. CONCERN MORE DIFFICULT. AS A RESULT OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY THEIR GOVERNMENTS, PRESIDENT CARTER AND SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT PARK CHUNG HEE HAVE NOW COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO OPPOSING VIEWS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF TONGSUN PARK, AND IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS HAS BECOME AN ISSUE OF IMPORTANT DOMESTIC CONCERN AND POLITICAL PRESTIGE FOR EACH MAN. FOR THE FIRST TIME U.S. OFFICIALS ARE SAYING THAT THE BASIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS ARE AT RISK.

THE SOUTH KOREAN OFFICIAL POSITION IS THAT IT HAD NO PART IN TONGSUN PARK'S WASHINGTON ACTIVITIES AND THAT IT DOES NOT CONTROL HIS DECISION WHETHER TO RETURN TO FACE THE 36-COUNT U.S. INDICTMENT. THE UNITED STATES IS EXTREMELY DOUBTFUL ABOUT THE FIRST POINT, WHICH HAS BEEN CHALLENGED BY THE GRAND JURY, AND IT REJECTS THE SECOND AS CLEARLY CONTRARY TO THE FACTS OF PRESIDENT PARK CHUNG HEE'S ONE-MAN RULE.

A COMPROMISE PROPOSAL BEING DISCUSSED IN SOME CIRCLES IS FOR U.S. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATORS TO INTERVIEW TONGSUN PARK IN SEOUL. BUT THIS WOULD BE OF DUBIOUS VALUE, IN THE VIEW OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH OFFICIALS.

THE BUSINESSMAN-LOBBYIST HAS ALREADY PROVIDED A VOLUNTARY STATEMENT IN WRITING FROM SEOUL, NOTARIZED UNDER A KOREAN LEGAL PROCEDURE, WHICH IS REPORTED TO BE LITTLE MORE THAN A REPETITION OF HIS PUBLIC DENIALS OF MISDEEDS.

BASED ON PAST PERFORMANCE, PRESIDENT PARK CHUNG HEE IS
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LIKELY TO BE EXTREMELY RIGID ABOUT THE TONGSUN PARK CASE,
AT LEAST WHILE PUBLIC ATTENTION IS ON THE MATTER.

AND IF THE UNITED STATES FOR ITS OWN REASONS BECOMES
EQUALLY ADAMANT--AS NOW SEEMS LIKELY--THE DANGEROUS
QUARREL COULD HAVE WIDE-RANGING CONSEQUENCES, ACCORDING
TO INFORMED OFFICIALS.

END QUOTE

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